

BOOK REVIEW

A.S. DUNCAN, G.R. DUNSTAN, and R.B. WELBOURN: *Dictionary of Medical Ethics: New Revised Edition*. New York, Crossroad, 1981. pp. xxxi + 459. \$24.50.

OUR medical and scientific advances have confronted us with a variety of moral dilemmas and questions that never before existed. In response to these problems we are witnessing the development of a new and more comprehensive medical ethics. *The Dictionary of Medical Ethics* is meant to serve as an introduction to this important area.

This book, published in England and now in its second and revised edition, is addressed not only to physicians but to all members of the health care professions. Physicians are the major contributors and approximately 20% from members in the field of law, philosophy, and theology. This contrasts sharply with the situation in our country, where philosophers and theologians are more in the forefront.

The major shortcoming of this otherwise interesting book is that many of the authors merely define a problem and then offer their personal ethical opinion. Of much greater value would have been the inclusion of a discussion of the ethical issues, the principles involved, and the justification for the conclusion. Several authors did this but regrettably too few. There are also some entries which, although informative, have little relationship to medical ethics. A few of the articles, however, are impressive and should receive special mention. These are: Medical Science by R.B. Welbourne, Medical Ethics by G.R. Dunstan, and Hippocratic Tradition by Vivian Nutton.

This book will prove to be a comfortable introduction for those who have had little contact with the area of medical ethics. Those, however, who are more seriously interested may be disappointed and find it less rewarding.

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